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who can afford to use European soap[1] delight to do so, and laundry work, in particular ironing, is considered a fashionable employment and one that is a mark of wealth and status. As such, it is chiefly in the hands of the men, many of whom learn to iron in domestic service. The husbands as the wage-earners are in any case considered sole owners of both their own and their wives' clothes,[2] and when the young man can acquire a bit of soap he likes to wash and iron in public outside his hut, surrounded by an admiring crowd of small boys. Thus the washing of clothes is women's work in the old-fashioned villages, but a male occupation under more modern conditions.

Women care for their children devotedly, but rarely give up any time to them exclusively. Babies are washed with warm water and massaged each morning and fed with gruel twice a day (cf. p. 69), but otherwise they are slung on their mothers' backs wherever they go—to work or to a beer-drink—but are not definitely 'amused' for any period of time or taken for walks. Small sisters do most of the work of supervising the younger children, and thus relieve the mothers.

Preparation of Meals.

If the housework proper, as we have described it, is not a very heavy drain on a woman's time, the preparation of meals and all the associated activities are far longer and more complicated than in our society. Wood for the fire has to be collected daily, or every two days, and this is woman's work. A man fetches wood for his chief, or for a European when required to. For his wife he will only cut down a suitable tree stem on the way back from gardening, and leave it for her to pick up on her return. She usually carries a bundle of dried wood six to eight feet long on her head. When a village is newly built dry firewood is plentiful near home, but in two or three years' time the supply is almost exhausted and the phrase 'she has gone for firewood' (*Aya ku nkuni*) may mean an expedition of an hour or so. On the copper belt the problem has already become acute and well-paid Africans employ servants to gather their wood, or try to buy faggots in the native market —one of the causes of the great increase in the cost of living in urban areas.

[1] This practically only occurs in the neighbourhood of a white store.

[2] He wears her clothes whenever he likes, and I have seen men strip their wives as a dramatic gesture in a quarrel threatening to lead to divorce.

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it certain that if production were higher and if, for example, the soil were better and the labour supply more ample, that the people would fill bigger granaries and secure a better diet? This question must be answered in the light of the dominant economic interests of this particular tribe and their conceptions of wealth. We know that many primitive people accumulate large stores of food from motives entirely different from our own. The Trobriand Islanders make stacks of yams far beyond their ordinary daily needs in order to fill the yam stores of their sisters' husbands, and to acquire kudos by this fulfilment of their kinship dues. They delight in producing surplus food in order to display it and offer it in public exchange. Other Melanesian and Polynesian peoples work as seems to us unnecessarily hard in order to pile up supplies for periodic feasts. But W. E. Armstrong and F. E. Williams have shown how such feasts in south-eastern New Guinea gave a great stimulus to social and economic life and have argued against their suppression even on economic grounds.[1] Similar examples of the social importance of accumulating animal or vegetable food, as apart from its use as a food-supply, could be given from all over the world. We have to ask ourselves, therefore, whether the Bemba reckon wealth in terms of surplus food and whether prestige is attached to its possession. Since the economic values of a primitive people are inevitably affected profoundly by contact with Europeanism, it will be necessary to answer these questions to make a comparison between conditions as they probably existed at the end of the nineteenth century and are still operative in the more remote parts of the country, and those newer ideas of wealth which are found among natives in closer contact with white civilization.

To begin with, it can be said quite categorically that neither in pre-European days, nor at the present, were or are a man's possessions in food or other objects used as a measure of his social status. The material possessions of the Bemba are too limited and of too impermanent a character. A glance inside a Bemba hut will show how few objects it actually contains even at the present day. The poverty of the people, judged by our standards, is striking, and it is remarkable even compared with the neighbouring tribes. One axe, one spear, one hoe, a bed-mat, four or five cooking

[1] F. E. Williams, 'Depopulation of the Suan District', *Anthrop. Report, Papua*, No. 13, 50–6.

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pots, and the same number of baskets and a couple of blankets would be the usual equipment. Few men own more than one cloth, or an outfit of European clothes such as shorts and a shirt, or the tattered remnants of these. Women rarely have more than one frock or cloth. Besides these, the people treasure certain hereditary objects of no economic value such as the bow of the man, the bead girdle (*umushimgo*) of the woman, and certain beads, ivory bracelets, or anklets. A few Bemba own goats and sheep, and many keep chickens and pigeons. All these possessions are individually owned and bequeathed to descendants according to rule, i.e. the heirlooms described above descend to the legal heirs, the maternal nephews or grandsons. Any personal property made by a man, or acquired by his efforts, may go to his own sons, his wife, or his sister, as the case may be. His clothes or money, or his hut, for the year or two it remains habitable, go to his wife or his children, and the working pots and baskets to the wife or the sister.

If the material possessions of the Bemba are few in number, they are also impermanent. Few objects can be reckoned as lasting more than four or five years. It is impossible to protect the wood of houses and furniture from the ravages of white ants, and the same applies to baskets, mats, and most of the other contents of an ordinary hut. Even sacred relics guarded with the utmost care seem to have been frequently destroyed in the past by insects or fire, and most of the surviving heirlooms are those of iron or copper, ivory, or a few beads. This in itself affects the people's attitude to property, and the social values associated with its accumulation.

To turn to present-day conditions, it must be realized that a money income is not yet a universal measure of wealth in this community. The amount of money the individual Bemba handles each year is very small. I put it at 15*s.* to £1 on an average (cf. Chap. X). Money can only be obtained by work for Europeans or occasionally for fellow Africans. The average unskilled wage was 7*s.* 6*d.* a month during my stay, and the opportunities for regular employment in the country were very few.[1] Practically only the domestic servants and clerks could be considered as regular wage earners, and these were naturally a very small proportion of the community. A certain amount of money is said to

[1] Cf. the figures for ab[illegible] labour given in Chapter I. It was reckoned in 1934 that in the Kasama area only 30 per cent. could have earned their tax of 10*s.* locally.

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first to watch the blessing of the traps and the weirs and later to invoke the help of the spirits at the setting of the nets on the big fishing pools (*ifishiba*). On both occasions the priest in charge asks those present if they have any grievance one against the other (*akantu pa mutima*), for the *umupashi* of an injured person might prevent the catching of fish by the rest. He then calls on the name of each of the Land Spirits, strikes the nets to bless them, and says, 'You, our spirits, now we are beginning to work, we people. Give us relish this year that we may eat and be satisfied.' It is important to notice that by the performance of such rites the *icibinda* definitely initiates the fishing season and synchronizes the activities of all the fishermen, and that these ceremonial duties are the basis of important economic privileges, which he maintains in spite of the overlordship of the territorial chief. This balance of interests between the local priest-headman and the chief produces a complicated system of fishing rights.

Permanent weirs are inherited in the matrilineal line and their ownership is often associated with the headmanship of fixed villages. The owner, besides his religious duties, allots trap holes in the weirs to different individuals who set their *miono* there. For instance, in one village the headman had divided the trap holes of a big weir between his sons and brothers, allotting two or three to each. Trap holes may be lent in return for a proportion of the catch, and in some cases a new-comer may obtain the right to build a small mud dike behind the main one giving tribute in return. Setting of nets arranged by casual agreement on the small rivers is strictly prohibited where fishing is valuable, unless the permission of the headman is obtained.

The *icibinda*, besides his right of allotting trap holes and giving permission to set nets, gets a proportion of the catch and also collects tribute for the chief. At one Chambesi village the headman (Molema) got one basket out of every three caught by each individual by the trapping method and two out of every three caught with nets. He sent to the territorial chief (Citimukulu) three baskets a year, two of these on the latter's special demand. In the case of some valuable fishing pools the territorial chiefs have secured special rights and can organize their own fishing expeditions (e.g. at Ca Kandwe, in Nkula's territory).

The sociology of fishing villages. Besides regulating the use of fishing resources this system of rights and ceremonies leaves its

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224 411 [435 23] (*d*) *Spears, bows, dogs, and guns.* The Bemba occasionally hunt in twos and threes with spears and dogs. Trained dogs are very valuable—about 10*s*.—and hard to buy. I never saw hunters go out with dogs, but I know that they are extremely skilful in throwing spears at a distance of about twenty feet, and that they sometimes kill small duiker in this manner. Bows and arrows are carried by very old men only and used to shoot at monkeys raiding gardens. [423] A bow is handed down ceremoniously to a dead man's heir but is not often used in the hunt. It is the ambition of every native to own a muzzle-loading gun, which he can purchase for about 30*s*. and obtain a Government licence to use. Many Bemba still go to the mines for no other purpose than to earn the money for a gun, which seems to promise security and prestige in their old age. However, many of these guns are in fact more deadly to the hunter than to the quarry, since they are rammed with shot, slag iron, and rusty nails till the long-suffering barrels explode. It is unlikely that many buck are killed in this way.

[177 643] European rifles are owned only by hunters employed by Europeans, or chiefs. The Bemba are said to be skilled trackers and think nothing of spending two or three days in pursuit of game. Game which is killed with a gun is the property of the shooter, to divide as he pleases, after he has given a portion to the nearest headman or chief. There is no special ritual attached to shooting, although the hunter may ask a blessing from the headman if he wishes, and in any case calls on his *imipashi* and carries magic charms.

224 463 (*e*) *Elephant hunters.* The Bemba elephant hunters were typical magician-specialists (*ifibinda*), i.e. they possessed both skill and the magic necessary to give them success. Elephants were killed formerly by the aid of weighted spears of specially heavy make by hunters known as *bashimunini*, with dogs and spears and large crowds of beaters by another type of hunter known as *bakalongwe*, or with guns traded from the Arabs by those called *Bafundi*. Nowadays elephant hunters only work for the Government or for certain big chiefs with special permission. The ordinary native is allowed to kill an elephant only when it is actually raiding his garden.

[422] All elephant hunters were under the direct control of the chief in the old days, and he had the monopoly of the ivory so obtained. The chief summoned the hunters, but they were led by the *icibinda*.